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THE MELTING POT

TRIUMEQ is a once-a-day pill used to treat HIV-1. TRIUMEQ should not be used by itself in some people. Take TRIUMEQ exactly as your healthcare provider tells you.

Is it time for you? Ask your doctor.

APPROVED USES

TRIUMEQ is a prescription medicine used to treat Human Immunodeficiency Virus-1 (HIV-1) infection in adults. HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS. It is not known if TRIUMEQ is safe or effective in children under the age of 18. TRIUMEQ is not for use by itself in people who have or have had resistance to abacavir, dolutegravir, or lamivudine.

TRIUMEQ does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS. You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illness.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about TRIUMEQ?

- **Serious allergic reaction (hypersensitivity reaction).** TRIUMEQ contains abacavir. Patients taking TRIUMEQ may have a serious allergic reaction to abacavir that can cause death. Your risk is much higher if you have a gene variation called HLA-B*5701. Your healthcare provider can determine with a blood test if you have this gene variation. **If you get symptoms from 2 or more of the following groups while taking TRIUMEQ, call your healthcare provider right away: 1. fever; 2. rash; 3. nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or stomach pain; 4. generally ill feeling, extreme tiredness, or achiness; 5. shortness of breath, cough, or sore throat.** Your pharmacist will give you a Warning Card with a list of these symptoms. **Carry this Warning Card with you at all times.**

If you stop taking TRIUMEQ because of an allergic reaction, never take TRIUMEQ or any other medicine that contains abacavir or dolutegravir again. If you take TRIUMEQ or any other abacavir-containing medicine again after you have had an allergic reaction, **within hours** you may get **life-threatening symptoms** that may include **very low blood pressure** or **death**. If you stop TRIUMEQ for any other reason, even for a few days, and you are not allergic to TRIUMEQ, talk with your healthcare provider before taking it again. Taking TRIUMEQ again can cause a serious allergic or life-threatening reaction, even if you never had an allergic reaction to it before. **If your healthcare provider tells you that you can take TRIUMEQ again, start taking it when you are around medical help or people who can call a healthcare provider if you need one.**

- **A buildup of acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis can happen in some people who take TRIUMEQ. This serious medical emergency can cause death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you feel very weak or tired; have unusual muscle pain; have trouble breathing; have stomach pain with nausea and vomiting; feel cold, especially in your arms and legs; feel dizzy/light-headed; or have a fast/irregular heartbeat.
- **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems can happen in people who take TRIUMEQ. In some cases, these severe liver problems can lead to death. You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems if you are female, very overweight, or have been taking nucleoside analogue medicines for a long time. Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following signs or symptoms:

- yellow skin, or the white part of the eyes turns yellow; dark urine; light-colored stools; nausea; itching; or stomach-area pain.

- **Worsening of hepatitis B virus in people who have HIV-1 infection.** If you have HIV-1 and hepatitis B virus infections, your hepatitis virus infection may get worse if you stop taking TRIUMEQ. Do not stop taking TRIUMEQ without first talking to your healthcare provider, so he or she can monitor your health.
- **Resistant hepatitis B virus.** If you have HIV-1 and hepatitis B, the hepatitis B virus can change (mutate) during your treatment with TRIUMEQ and become harder to treat (resistant).
- **Use with interferon and ribavirin-based regimens.** If you're taking TRIUMEQ and interferon, with or without ribavirin, tell your healthcare provider about any new symptoms. Liver disease might get worse in patients who are taking HIV-1 medicines and interferon.

Who should not take TRIUMEQ?

- **Do not take TRIUMEQ if you:**
 - have the HLA-B*5701 gene variation
 - have ever had an allergic reaction to abacavir, dolutegravir, or lamivudine
 - take dofetilide (Tikosyn®)
 - have certain liver problems

What are other possible side effects of TRIUMEQ?

- People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during treatment with TRIUMEQ. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your liver function before and during treatment with TRIUMEQ.
- When you start taking HIV-1 medicines, your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.
- Changes in body fat can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicines.
- Some HIV-1 medicines, including TRIUMEQ, may increase your risk of heart attack.

The most common side effects of TRIUMEQ include: trouble sleeping, headache, and tiredness.

These are not all the possible side effects of TRIUMEQ. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

Important Safety Information continued on next page.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088. Please see brief summary of Prescribing Information for TRIUMEQ on the following pages.



If you don't have prescription coverage and can't afford your medicines, visit GSKforYou.com or call the ViiV Healthcare Response Center 1-877-844-8872



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“I have ^{the}
Courage
to ^{start} **HIV**
treatment.
It’s Time.”



Not an actual patient. Testimonial is based on a collection of real patient experiences.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRIUMEQ?

- **Before you take TRIUMEQ, tell your healthcare provider if you:**
 - have been tested and know whether or not you have a gene variation called HLA-B*5701.
 - have or had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection; have kidney problems; have heart problems, smoke, or have diseases that increase your risk of heart disease such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes; drink alcoholic beverages; or have any other medical condition.
 - are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if TRIUMEQ will harm your unborn baby.
 - are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take TRIUMEQ.
- **You should not take TRIUMEQ if you also take:**
 - abacavir (EPZICOM, TRIZIVIR, or ZIAGEN)
 - lamivudine (COMBIVIR®, EPIVIR, EPIVIR-HBV®, EPZICOM, or TRIZIVIR)
 - emtricitabine (EMTRIVA®, ATRIPLA®, COMPLERA®, STRIBILD®, TRUVADA®)
- **Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take**, including prescription and nonprescription medicines (for example, antacids; laxatives; vitamins such as iron or calcium supplements; anti-seizure medicines; other medicines to treat HIV-1, hepatitis, or tuberculosis; metformin; and methadone) and herbal supplements (for example, St. John's wort). TRIUMEQ may affect the way they work, and they may affect how TRIUMEQ works.

 **Triumeq®**
abacavir 600 mg/dolutegravir 50 mg/
lamivudine 300 mg tablets

It's Time.

BRIEF SUMMARY

TRIUMEQ® (TRI-u-meck)

(abacavir 600 mg/dolutegravir 50 mg/lamivudine 300 mg) tablets

Read this Medication Guide before you start taking TRIUMEQ and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or your treatment. Be sure to carry your TRIUMEQ Warning Card with you at all times.

What is the most important information I should know about TRIUMEQ?

- **Serious allergic reaction (hypersensitivity reaction).** TRIUMEQ contains abacavir (also contained in EPZICOM®, TRIZIVIR®, and ZIAGEN®). Patients taking TRIUMEQ may have a serious allergic reaction (hypersensitivity reaction) that can cause death. Your risk of this allergic reaction to abacavir is much higher if you have a gene variation called HLA-B*5701. Your healthcare provider can determine with a blood test if you have this gene variation.

If you get a symptom from 2 or more of the following groups while taking TRIUMEQ, call your healthcare provider right away to find out if you should stop taking TRIUMEQ.

	Symptom(s)
Group 1	Fever
Group 2	Rash
Group 3	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal (stomach area) pain
Group 4	Generally ill feeling, extreme tiredness, or achiness
Group 5	Shortness of breath, cough, sore throat

A list of these symptoms is on the Warning Card your pharmacist gives you. Carry this Warning Card with you at all times.

If you stop TRIUMEQ because of an allergic reaction, never take TRIUMEQ or any other medicines that contain abacavir or dolutegravir (EPZICOM, ZIAGEN, TRIZIVIR, or TIVICAY®) again. If you take TRIUMEQ or any other abacavir-containing medicine again after you have had an allergic reaction, within hours you may get life-threatening symptoms that may include very low blood pressure or death. If you stop TRIUMEQ for any other reason, even for a few days, and you are not allergic to TRIUMEQ, talk with your healthcare provider before taking it again. Taking TRIUMEQ again can cause a serious allergic or life-threatening reaction, even if you never had an allergic reaction to it before.

If your healthcare provider tells you that you can take TRIUMEQ again, start taking it when you are around medical help or people who can call a healthcare provider if you need one.

- **Build-up of acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis can happen in some people who take TRIUMEQ. Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. Call your healthcare provider right away if you get the following symptoms that could be signs of lactic acidosis:
 - feel very weak or tired
 - have unusual (not normal) muscle pain
 - have trouble breathing
 - have stomach pain with nausea and vomiting
 - feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
 - feel dizzy or light-headed
 - have a fast or irregular heartbeat
- **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems can happen in people who take TRIUMEQ. In some cases these severe liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis).

Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:

- your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow
- dark “tea-colored” urine
- light colored stools (bowel movements)
- nausea
- itching
- stomach-area pain

You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems if you are female, very overweight, or have been taking nucleoside analogue medicines for a long time.

- **Worsening of hepatitis B virus in people who have HIV-1 infection.** If you have HIV-1 and hepatitis B virus infections, your hepatitis virus infection may get worse if you stop taking TRIUMEQ. To help avoid this: Take TRIUMEQ exactly as prescribed.
 - Do not run out of TRIUMEQ.
 - Do not stop TRIUMEQ without talking to your healthcare provider.
 - Your healthcare provider should monitor your health and do regular blood tests to check your liver for at least several months if you stop taking TRIUMEQ.
- **Resistant Hepatitis B Virus (HBV).** If you have HIV-1 and hepatitis B, the hepatitis B virus can change (mutate) during your treatment with TRIUMEQ and become harder to treat (resistant).
- **Use with interferon and ribavirin-based regimens.** Worsening of liver disease has happened in people infected with HIV-1 and hepatitis C virus who are taking anti-HIV medicines and are also being treated for hepatitis C with interferon with or without ribavirin. If you are taking TRIUMEQ and interferon with or without ribavirin, tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms.

What is TRIUMEQ?

TRIUMEQ is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 (Human Immunodeficiency Virus-type 1) infection. TRIUMEQ contains 3 prescription medicines: abacavir (ZIAGEN), dolutegravir (TIVICAY), and lamivudine (EPIVIR®).

- TRIUMEQ is not for use by itself in people who have or have had resistance to abacavir, dolutegravir, or lamivudine.

It is not known if TRIUMEQ is safe and effective in children.

TRIUMEQ may help:

- reduce the amount of HIV-1 in your blood. This is called “viral load”.
- increase the number of white blood cells called CD4+ (T) cells in your blood, which help fight off other infections.

Reducing the amount of HIV-1 and increasing the CD4+ (T) cells in your blood may help improve your immune system. This may reduce your risk of death or getting infections that can happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

TRIUMEQ does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.

Avoid doing things that can spread HIV-1 infection to others.

- Do not share or re-use needles or other injection equipment.
- Do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them, like toothbrushes and razor blades.
- Do not have any kind of sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about how to prevent passing HIV to other people.

(continued on the next page)

BRIEF SUMMARY (cont'd)

TRIUMEQ® (abacavir, dolutegravir, and lamivudine) tablets

Who should not take TRIUMEQ?

Do not take TRIUMEQ if you:

- have a certain type of gene variation called the HLA-B*5701 allele. Your healthcare provider will test you for this before prescribing treatment with TRIUMEQ.
- have ever had an allergic reaction to abacavir, dolutegravir, or lamivudine
- take dofetilide (TIKOSYN®). Taking TRIUMEQ and dofetilide (TIKOSYN) can cause side effects that may be life-threatening.
- have certain liver problems

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRIUMEQ?

Before you take TRIUMEQ, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have been tested and know whether or not you have a particular gene variation called HLA-B*5701
- have or had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C virus infection
- have kidney problems
- have heart problems, smoke, or have diseases that increase your risk of heart disease such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes
- drink alcoholic beverages
- have any other medical condition
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if TRIUMEQ will harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking TRIUMEQ.

Pregnancy Registry. There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of the registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk to your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.

- **are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take TRIUMEQ.** You should not breastfeed because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby. It is not known if abacavir or dolutegravir passes into your breast milk. Lamivudine can pass into your breast milk and may harm your baby. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. TRIUMEQ may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how TRIUMEQ works.

You should not take TRIUMEQ if you also take:

- abacavir (EPZICOM, TRIZIVIR, or ZIAGEN)
- lamivudine (COMBIVIR®, EPIVIR, EPIVIR-HBV®, EPZICOM, or TRIZIVIR)
- emtricitabine (EMTRIVA®, ATRIPLA®, COMPLERA®, STRIBILD®, TRUVADA®)

Tell your healthcare provider if you take:

- antacids, laxatives, or other medicines that contain aluminum, magnesium, sucralfate (CARAFATE®), or buffered medicines. TRIUMEQ should be taken at least 2 hours before or 6 hours after you take these medicines.
- anti-seizure medicines:
 - oxcarbazepine (TRILEPTAL®)
 - phenytoin (DILANTIN®, DILANTIN®-125, PHENYTEK®)
 - phenobarbital
 - carbamazepine (CARBATROL®, EQUETRO®, TEGRETOL®, TEGRETOL®-XR, TERIL®, EPITOL®)
- any other medicine to treat HIV-1
- iron or calcium supplements taken by mouth. Supplements containing calcium or iron may be taken at the same time with TRIUMEQ if taken with food. Otherwise, TRIUMEQ should be taken at least 2 hours before or 6 hours after you take these medicines.

- medicines used to treat hepatitis virus infections, such as interferon or ribavirin
- a medicine that contains metformin
- methadone
- rifampin (RIFATER®, RIFAMATE®, RIMACTANE®, RIFADIN®)
- St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of your medicines with you to show to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you are not sure if you take one of the medicines listed above.

How should I take TRIUMEQ?

- **Take TRIUMEQ exactly as your healthcare provider tells you.**
- Do not change your dose or stop taking TRIUMEQ without talking with your healthcare provider.
- Stay under the care of a healthcare provider while taking TRIUMEQ.
- You can take TRIUMEQ with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of TRIUMEQ, take it as soon as you remember. If it is within 4 hours of your next dose, skip the missed dose and take the next dose at your regular time. Do not take 2 doses at the same time. If you are not sure about your dosing, call your healthcare provider.
- Do not run out of TRIUMEQ. The virus in your blood may become resistant to other HIV-1 medicines if TRIUMEQ is stopped for even a short time. When your supply starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy.
- If you take too much TRIUMEQ, call your healthcare provider or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

What are the possible side effects of TRIUMEQ?

TRIUMEQ can cause serious side effects including:

- **See “What is the most important information I should know about TRIUMEQ?”**
- **Changes in liver tests.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during treatment with TRIUMEQ. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your liver function before and during treatment with TRIUMEQ.
- **Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome)** can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.
- **Changes in body fat (fat redistribution)** can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicines. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the middle of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these problems are not known.
- **Heart attack (myocardial infarction).** Some HIV medicines including TRIUMEQ may increase your risk of heart attack.

The most common side effects of TRIUMEQ include:

- trouble sleeping
- headache
- tiredness

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of TRIUMEQ. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

(continued on the next page)

BRIEF SUMMARY (cont'd)

TRIUMEQ® (abacavir, dolutegravir, and lamivudine) tablets

How should I store TRIUMEQ?

- Store TRIUMEQ at room temperature between 68°F to 77°F (20°C to 25°C).
- Store TRIUMEQ in the original bottle.
- Keep the bottle of TRIUMEQ tightly closed and protect from moisture.
- The bottle of TRIUMEQ contains a desiccant packet to help keep your medicine dry (protect it from moisture). Keep the desiccant packet in the bottle. Do not remove the desiccant packet.

Keep TRIUMEQ and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about the safe and effective use of TRIUMEQ

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. Do not use TRIUMEQ for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give TRIUMEQ to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. It may harm them.

This Medication Guide summarizes the most important information about TRIUMEQ. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about TRIUMEQ that is written for health professionals.

For more information go to www.TRIUMEQ.com or call 1-877-844-8872.

What are the ingredients in TRIUMEQ?

Active ingredients: abacavir, dolutegravir, and lamivudine

Inactive ingredients: D-mannitol, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, povidone, and sodium starch glycolate. The tablet film-coating contains iron oxide black, iron oxide red, macrogol/PEG, polyvinyl alcohol—part hydrolyzed, talc, and titanium oxide.

This Medication Guide has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Manufactured for:



ViiV Healthcare
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

by:



GlaxoSmithKline
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

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ON THE COVER

It's our Money Issue with a Children & Family feature on Kate, Austin, and Grady. Money and kids? Peas and carrots. Photography by Brett Dorrian, www.brettdorrianartiststudios.com

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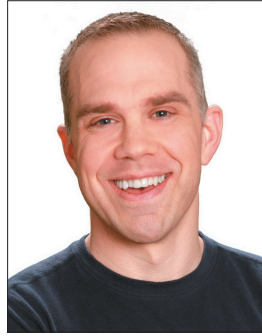
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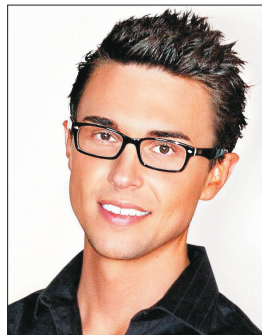
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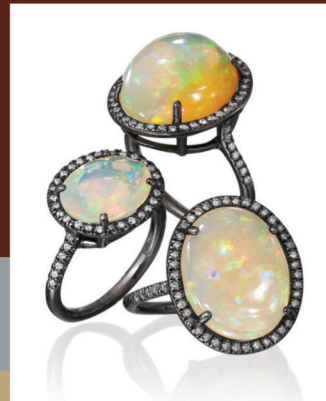
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Reading My Future

I was reading through the pieces in this issue when I became quite engrossed with Shane's recap of Suze Orman's financial advice for young fabulous people. I yelled over the cube wall something like, "You don't have this book yet, do you? Because I just ordered us each a copy." Because that's what people who need financial help do: we pull out our Amazon app and order a few copies of a financial assistance book. Done. Problems solved.

Sure, there's over a decade of life between my age and Shane's, but I'm still young and fabulous at 37, according to Orman. And we listen to her. Because she's Suze Orman. But, I'd also argue that finances is a topic where people have a definite and legitimate likelihood for having a case of arrested development. More than just a TV show with awesome quips and actors, arrested development means that we stopped maturing in an area at a certain point. So, based on where we stopped our financial development, we could be in our 30s, 40s, 50s, and older with the financial knowledge of a 20-something, but with varying outlooks and levels of optimism due to having a shorter future ahead of us.

There's a certain amount of merit to put into the differences between generations, and plenty to disregard. The Millennials catch a lot of flak about seeming irresponsible or flighty, the Baby Boomers are going to bankrupt us, and the Gen Xers are still suspicious of everything, probably wishing we were all still chain-smoking. I can't predict the future, but I do know that not having our financial ducks in a row doesn't do any generation any favors. Being part of the later end of Gen X, and having

been jobless during my career arc, I know what it's like to cash out a 401K to use it for living expenses. Many of us who've been jobless, no matter which generation, are likely always waiting for the other shoe to drop, and rarely feel optimism...let alone financial optimism. So, the ability to not only be financially solvent from day to day, but also put away for the future again, is not one that I take lightly, or have fully realized, yet.

If you would have told me back when I was flagrantly spending money just after college that I'd someday take great pride in charitable giving and setting aside money for my future, I would've assumed that I had somehow married rich. But, those of us who are single particularly need to pay attention to what our golden years will entail because, even if we want to, we won't be able to work and draw income forever. We need to be our own versions of marrying rich. Enough of the willful ignorance. That I'll be healthy and able to draw an income for a job well done forever is delusional. Luckily, any start is a good start in financial planning. There is no damning "too late." Reading the pieces in this issue about what kids mean to our pocketbooks, estate planning, and the effects of illness, really have me converted to the belief that I need to take what Shane and Suze are saying to heart and can build my own dang financial future.

It's going to take some time and effort and money, but it's like working toward anything else we want in life. And it, of all things, will be worth it. ■

With you and with thanks,
Andy



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"Tout Est Pardonné" "All Is Forgiven"

The cartoonists murdered at *Charlie Hebdo* weren't sophomoric kids, or, if sophomoric, they were Sophomores Emeriti; Georges Wolinski, 80, had drawn cartoons since the 1960s; Cabu (Jean Cabut), 76, the magazine's lead cartoonist; Honoré (Philippe Honoré), 73, drew the last cartoon *Charlie Hebdo* tweeted; Tignous (Bernhard Verlhac) 57, was a member of Cartoonists for Peace; Charb (Stephane Charbonnier), publisher and artist, was the youngest at 47.

You can't do breaking news in a bi-weekly; now, the world knows that Muslim terrorists murdered six others January 7: Uncle Bernard (Bernard Maris), 68, an economist and columnist for the magazine; Michel Renaud, a visiting former journalist; Mustapha Ourrad, Algerian-born copy editor; Elsa Cayat, a psychoanalyst who penned the magazine's "Le Divan" ("The Couch"); Frederic Boisseau, building maintenance worker. Killed also in the line of duty were police officers Franck Brinsolaro, 49, appointed to head security for Charb, and Ahmed Merabet, 42, Muslim, shot down on the sidewalk outside.

The murders outraged world-wide, and continue to be parsed by media, politicians, clergy. This piece simply honors my own love of comics,

cartoons—and cartoonists. Satire. It's been around since Plautus and Aristophanes; it permeates English in pen and ink—William Hogarth and Jonathan Swift; and French—Voltaire and Rabelais.

I picked up *MAD* magazine in the 1950s, thrilled that *someone* (Bill Gaines and gang) was finally baring the "truth" about adults. I was hooked. I went on to collect Britain's *Private Eye* (one of whose writers we know stateside as Dame Edna), the Franco-Belgian *L'Écho des Savanes*, and others. My own comic book store, The Million Year Picnic, sold everything and maintained an aisle marked "Adult." I've not read *Charlie Hebdo*, but whether I liked every cartoon or not, I'd defend their right to publish them.

January 14, *Charlie Hebdo* was back on the stands, its normal print run of 60,000 upped to 5,000,000. Bannered with "Tout Est Pardonné" over a weeping cartoon Muhammad holding a sign reading, "Je suis Charlie," the cover was drawn by *Charlie Hebdo* artist Luz (Renald Luzier). He'd overslept by half an hour and missed that fatal staff meeting. Breaking into tears at a press conference, Luz said that his image represents "just a little guy who's crying," then confirmed, "yes, it is Muhammad." ■



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OUR LAVENDER

LAVENDER LENS | PHOTOS BY SOPHIA HANTZES



Photo by Sophia Hantzes

GOLDEN GOPHERS WOMENS BASKETBALL V. PENN STATE LADY LIONS

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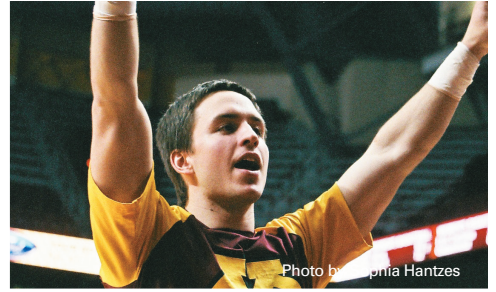


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OUR LAVENDER

"BEAR" WITH ME (WHILE I TELL YOU ABOUT)...

BY BARRY LEAVITT

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DRAG QUEEN GAME NIGHT

February 12 • 7-10pm

The Saloon •

6 lucky contestants drawn from a raffle go head-to-head in several game night style games for their chance to win amazing prize packages dahling! Drag Queen Game Night brings you up close and personal with drag celebrities for 2 and a half hours of edge-of-your-seat, rip roaring fun! Who will win? Who will lose? Who will pop their tuck? Find out February 12. Search "Drag Queen Game Night" on Facebook for more info.

INTERNATIONAL BEAR CONVERGENCE 2015

February 12-16

Palm Springs, CA

Looking to get a break from winter in Minnesota? Book that last minute airfare and head to International Bear Convergence in Palm Springs, CA. This event is destined to become a premier winter event for bears & admirers as this desert oasis turns into a winter den over Presidents' Day Weekend. The four-day event includes four themed pool parties, three themed dance parties featuring thousands of frisky, furry bears, their friends and their fans. Visit www.ibc-ps.com for more info.

LET'S TALK ABOUT PREP

Saturday, February 14 • 1-3pm

The Saloon • 830 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis

Join a panel of community resources to talk about Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis as a one way to prevent new HIV infections. Is PrEP right for you? Ask your questions and learn about this HIV prevention tool! Search "Let's Talk About PrEP" on Facebook for more info.

19 BAR'S JANUARY POOL TOURNAMENT

Sunday, February 15 • 4pm

19 Bar • 19 W. 15th St., Minneapolis

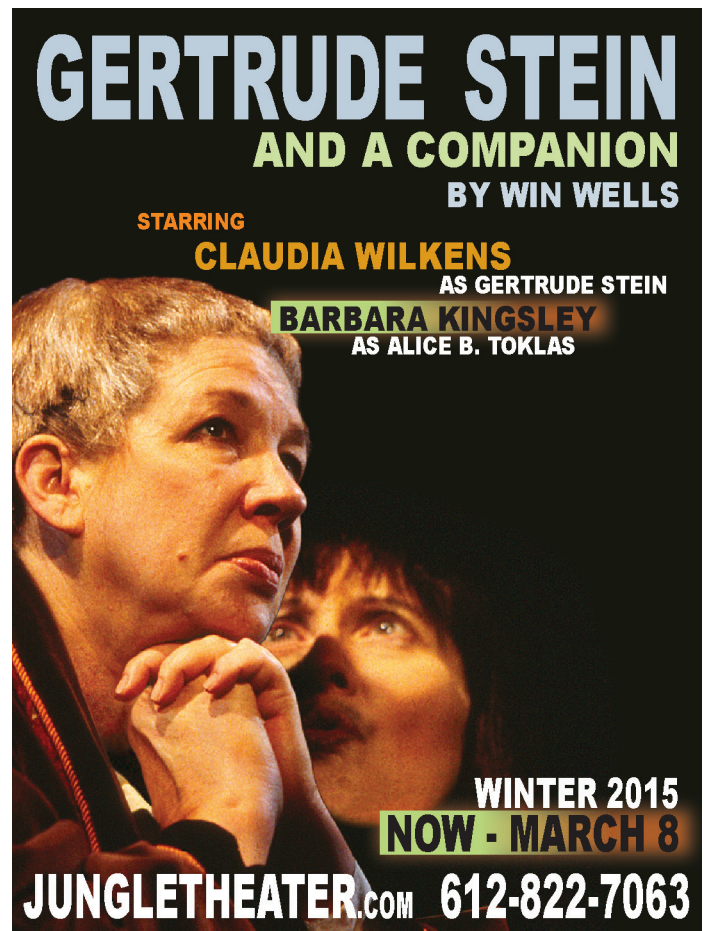
Chalk up your pool cue! It's time for the 19 Bar's monthly pool tournament! \$5 entry fee! There's a CASH PRIZE for the winner, and \$15 BAR TABS for 2nd and 3rd place! Don't miss it! Visit www.facebook.com and search "The 19 Bar" for more information.

VELVET QUEER WOMEN LOUNGE & DANCE NIGHT

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African America. Photo by Mike Paul

AFRICAN AMERICA

Feb. 7-9

Mixed Blood Theatre, 1501 S. 4th St., Mpls.

(612) 338-6131

www.mixedblood.org

Minnesota has been a major magnet for displaced people and immigrants since the 19th century. In recent years, African people, displaced by American, European, and Chinese national/corporate interests and their nontransparent militarism, have been compelled to have rightful denizens seek refuge away from their homelands. Mixed Blood Theatre's 55454 Series on Africans and Muslims in America presents a new play written by beloved actor-director Warren Bowles.

African America reveals how so many Americans see the African continent as one monolithic culture rather than the vast mix of languages and cultures that it truly is. An African American woman is made aware of this by someone with a Pan-African overview. Bowles shares, "We've all noticed the changes in the cultural landscape. Women, citizens of color, the GLBT community, and our immigrant population are finding increased social and political power and influence. These changes should not be noticed then ignored. They should be understood and appreciated. *African America* is an attempt to start really understanding our Somali, Liberian, Ethiopian, and Sudanese neighbors and those of other African heritage. They are the new Minnesota, new America of which we are just a part."

CALVIN BERGER

Through Feb. 15

New Century Theatre, City Center

615 Hennepin Ave., Mpls.

(612) 455-9501

www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org

This contemporary re-imagining of Edmund Rostand's classic 19th century play, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, is set in a high school, racked with all those confused hormonal feelings of inadequacy, peer pressure, and erotic/romantic yearnings. Minneapolis Musical Theatre and Hennepin Theatre Trust present Barry Winer's acclaimed musical *Calvin Berger* under Joshua James Campbell's direction. He likes how Winer's Calvin "actually doesn't have a big nose. He thinks he does. So many of our insecurities are in our mind. I hope this musical allows people to let go of some of those mistaken insecurities. We all had insecurities in high school. I was the over-involved kid — way too many activities. Also, I'm a Former Fat Kid — FFK — so I carried the weight of that, literally and figuratively, around with me for a long time. I never thought I was the cute, attractive one."

Title role actor Gregory Adam says, "For this, I didn't even need to go back to high school to draw off insecurity issues. We all have things that we feel self-conscious about but over time find redeem-

ing qualities in ourselves that outweigh those small insecurities. The main difference is that in high school you haven't pushed yourself out there enough to know that you can recover from rejection. As a result, the thought of being rejected, relative to everything else, is quite literally one of the worst things that could happen in your life. After you add more life experiences, those things seem so miniscule but in high school it has so much weight to it."

THE COLOR PURPLE

Through Feb. 15

Park Square Theatre

408 St. Peter St., St. Paul

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www.parksquaretheatre.org

In the 1980s *The Color Purple*, both Alice Walker's novel and Steven Spielberg's film, were a cultural phenomenon. The epic story of Celie, an oppressed black woman in the Jim Crow south, struck a nerve with audiences across the racial spectrum. In 2004 Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Marsha Norman teamed up with the eclectic music/lyrics team of Brenda Russell, Allee Willis, and Stephen Bray to form what would become the Tony-nominated musical version.

The first Twin Cities *The Color Purple* staging stars the vibrant Aimee K. Bryant as protagonist Celie. It contains luminous cast members who have been named in *Lavender* "Bests" in past years: Jamecia Bennett, Darius Dotch, Regina Marie Williams, T. Mychael Rambo, and Dennis Spears. Actor Kasono Mwanza was the subject of a 2014 *Lavender* feature. Music Co-director Denise Prosek has also been named a *Lavender* "Best".

Prosek, who co-directs the music with Gary D. Hines, calls *The Color Purple* score "pretty amazing. Because the story takes place over thirty-plus years, it takes you on a whirlwind of styles including gospel, jazz, and blues, and infuses those classic styles with a modern groove that allows

the audience to move effortlessly through Celie's journey. There is a point in the story where Harpo opens up a juke joint, and I knew I needed that sound for our production; thus the six-piece live band: piano, woodwind, trombone, guitar, bass, and drums. They sound incredible, and with the cast, *The Color Purple* is going to rock Park Square!"

INTO THE WOODS Area Movie Theaters

The matinee audience I was a part of when watching the Disney film version of Stephen Sondheim's innovative musical contained several children. I wondered if they would take to it. Moreover, the film is darkly atmospheric and I thought "Will this scare or bore them?" But I was very pleased that they were into it! And so was I.

There has been a bit of a stir caused by ardent fans of the stage musical about cuts made for the film. Cuts made to make the film less bleak, which in this very particular case, I understand. And indeed, Sondheim himself has his own thoughts about that in a recent *Playbill* interview. (I think he makes a lot of sense.) Note, too, that James Lapine, who wrote the book for the musical, has written the screenplay and thankfully you feel that throughout.

The great virtue of *Into the Woods* is its recasting of the characters Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Rapunzel, and Jack of beanstalk fame into a unique and original new situation which compels us to reconfigure what for most of us have been



Into the Woods. Photo Courtesy of Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures



Calvin Berger. Photo by Unser Imagery

templated Brothers Grimm archetypes in our subconscious set in childhood. That's something that the film still totally captures.

The story lends itself naturally to epic vision, which the film certainly has in spades. But cinematographer Dion Beebe's many splendid close-up camera shots, matched with editor Wyatt Smith's magically deft incorporation of those shots, achieve a breathtaking blend of intimacy within the spectacular. It's director Rob Marshall's best work since *Chicago* over a decade ago. Much has been said of Meryl Streep's terrific witch performance and rightly so. But the young cast is just as much in step. Anna Kendrick's Cinderella is a revelation. Simon Russell Beale is touching as the village baker. Chris Pine and Billy Magnussen as royal brothers are simultaneously darling, arrogant, and joyous. And it's lovely for us old-timers to see the legendary Frances de la Tour in a brief but satisfying turn as the Giant.

LOVE AND INFORMATION

Through Feb. 22
Ritz Theatre
345 13th Ave. NE, Mpls.
(800) 838-2006
www.franktheatre.org

Full Disclosure: I think England's Caryl Churchill (*Cloud*

9, Top Girls, Fen, A Number, Far Away) is the greatest living playwright, bar none. So the fact that Frank Theatre's Wendy Knox, arguably the Twin Cities' best stage director, is producing her work again, in a regional premiere, is something truly special.

Knox reflects, "I've been fortunate enough to work on Churchill's work on five different productions, three at Frank and two in educational settings. What's thrilling about her work as a writer is that she has no fear about reinventing herself with each piece. Her work is so diverse and with each subject she tackles, she freely works in whatever form she chooses. What is remarkable — and challenging and thrilling — about *Love and Information* is the blank slate that she provides. There are no character descriptions, no setting information, no dialogue assigned to any particular characters: all of that becomes our job. We've spent the past week experimenting with the shifts in meaning when scenes are read by two men, a man and a woman, a white actor and a black actor, an older actor and a younger actor. She's provided us a fantastic puzzle, to which there are no right or wrong answers, but many different answers. It's a daunting but incredibly exciting project." ■

Pilgrimage Cafe



Left to right: Pilgrimage Cafe is a cozy South Minneapolis spot for your next global taste adventure. Be sure to get the Chimichurri Philly.

A little bit of the United Nations has moved into the old Citizen Cafe in south Minneapolis.

The newly opened Pilgrimage Cafe boasts an intimate space with an ambitious menu. Every continent, save Antarctica, is represented. From banh mi, ramen, chilaquiles, jerk pork chops, and pastrami on rye to kolaches, tacos, and a good old-fashioned BLT, the menu is chock full of casual eats from across the globe.

While many were shocked and saddened to learn of the old Citizen's closing, future Pilgrimage owner and head chef Craig Ball saw an opportunity.

Fresh off his stint as sous chef for Mattie's on Main, the former corporate exec was ready to venture out on his own and with the help of a few trusted friends and colleagues from culinary school he did just that. Together the well-traveled, well-trained team plotted to put their combined love of comfort food from afar on high and share it with the neighborhood.

And share they do. Such was my experience a few weeks back. Along with a couple friends, I found myself once again eating my way across an entire menu. It was not hard, dear reader. Rather, it was a labor of love. One I hope you'll endeavor to replicate. At your own speed, of course.

Pilgrimage Cafe has the same warm and humble vibe (and, in fact, much of the same decor) as its predecessor; an ambience appropriate for an establishment aiming to put comfort front and center. The staff is equally friendly and outgoing. Don't hesitate to ply your server with questions about the

menu either. Like proud parents, they're happy to share with you the stories behind each dish.

The menu itself is broken up into two parts: brunch and dinner. Brunch is served until 2 p.m. and dinner from 4 p.m. until close.

Brunch is most definitely a bright spot at Pilgrimage. Not only do they offer it daily (except Monday, when they're closed), the food is eclectic and diverse, but fun and familiar. There's quite literally something for everyone. And the bottomless mimosas won't hurt either.

On the breakfasty side of things, favorites included the benedicts and chilaquiles. Sure, you can have a classic benedict, but my money's on the mole and BBQ bennies. Each is set atop a magical corn soufflé from Paraguay called chipa guazú. Trust me, you want to eat this. As for the chilaquiles, add the carnitas. The richness of the pork pairs perfectly with the spicy red sauce.

On the lunchy side of brunch, your options truly run the gamut. From steak and egg salad to a sexy gruyere and oaxaca-filled grilled cheese with house-made tomato soup, you're going to have a hard time nailing down just one entrée. Good luck. Just make sure someone at the table orders the Chimichurri Philly. If it's not you, make sure they share. If it is you, don't share! This Latin take on an American classic is sure to become a restaurant favorite. We were also big fans of the Buffalo Caesar Salad with its hot, spicy chicken and cool, crunchy salad.

One last suggestion: don't leave the brunch table without ordering the



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PHOTOS BY JUAN WARRICK, 2013 OLD BROADWAY CAST

Above: Benedicts with carnitas and turkey mole shown here. Below: Around the globe with Maultaschen, Chilaquiles, Black Bean Ravioli, Balsamic BBQ Chicken Sandwich, the wasabi-pea encrusted Ahi Tuna Wellington, and the divine "Donuts"...or whatever you want to call them.

donuts. Also, don't freak out when they show up to your table and don't look like donuts. Cruellers, beignets, cream puffs, call these peanut butter mousse-stuffed fried dough pillows whatever you like, so long as you put them in your mouth. And you're welcome.

Dinner at Pilgrimage is just as fun and adventurous as brunch, opening up a whole other half of the menu for you to explore. And I do mean explore.

Each item on the dinner menu represents a part of the world near and dear to someone's heart. Whether a recipe from grandma (as is the Maultaschen, a unique German meat and cheese-stuffed dumpling soup) or the black bean ravioli with turkey mole and avocado cream sauce hearkening back to Chef Craig's time in Latin America, each dish reflects a lot of love for the culture it came from.

Or cultures. The Caribbean Pork Normandy, for example, combines fiery, vibrant jerk spice with sweet, mellow sautéed apples. And brussels sprouts



that will render you speechless. The Ahi Tuna Wellington, like the pork, is another wonderful clash of flavors and technique.

As with brunch, don't leave the dinner table without ordering the donuts. Unless they're not available. If they're not, don't worry, something delicious will be. Chef Craig has a penchant for pastry, so keep an eye out for scratch-made cakes and other confections that strike his fancy.


You really do owe it to yourself to add Pilgrimage Cafe to your list of new places to check out. The humble little gem in south Minneapolis with the ambitious menu works. The stories Chef Craig and his team are telling and the cultures they're celebrating with food are absolutely delicious. And by delicious, I mean when are we going back for donuts?

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OUR SCENE

BAR & CLUBS | BAROMETER | PHOTO BY STEVE LENIUS

Twin Cities Leather Weekend Offers Cornucopia of Events

Over Presidents Day weekend, February 13-15, the annual Twin Cities Leather Weekend promises to be a gala celebration for the kink/leather community. All events take place at the Saloon (830 Hennepin Avenue, Downtown Minneapolis). During the Mr. Twin Cities Leather Contest on February 15, Mr. Twin Cities Leather 2014, Greg Menzel, will step down and sash his successor.

The Twin Cities Leather Weekend schedule is as follows:

Fri., Feb. 13

8 p.m. Meet & Greet
9:30 p.m. Contestant Introductions
& Order Draw
10 p.m. LeatherBOMB

Sat., Feb. 14

12:30 p.m. PrEP Discussion
1:30 p.m. Kink U Session 1
3:30 p.m. Kink U Session 2
7:30 p.m. Leather Social
8 p.m. Contest

Sun., Feb. 15

11:30 a.m. Victory Brunch
1:30 p.m. Community First! Award
10 p.m. Kinky Shower Contest

The new titleholder, who will receive a \$2,500 prize package thanks to generous support from the Saloon, Twin Cities Leather & Latté, and Uberlube, will compete in the International Mr. Leather Contest in Chicago over Memorial Day Weekend. The number of contestants is limited to five. A contestant application packet is available by e-mailing orders@twincitiesleather.com.

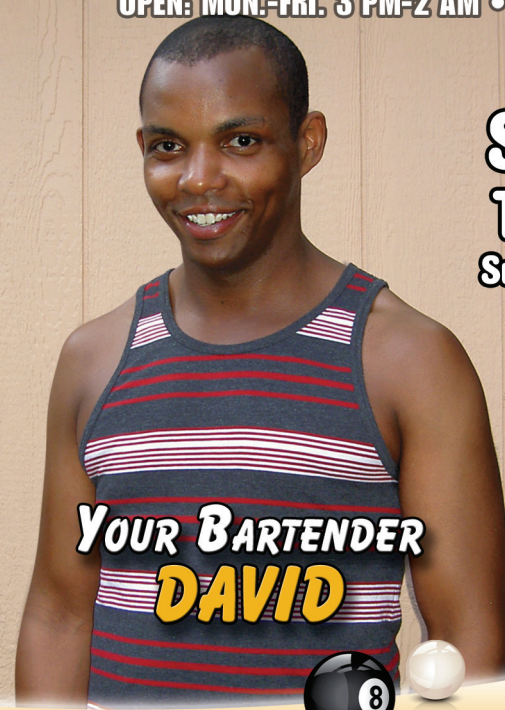
The Saloon is the co-title sponsor and event host. Uberlube and Bear Skin are the travel fund and event sponsors. *Lavender Magazine* is the official/exclusive media partner. The affiliated organizations are The Atons of Minneapolis, The North Star Kennel Club, Kink U by Titans of the Midwest, Titans of the Midwest, and Ladies of the Lakes. DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Minneapolis is the host hotel.

For more information, visit Twin Cities Leather Weekend on Facebook. ■




Greg Menzel, Mr. Twin Cities Leather 2014.
Photo by Steve Lenius


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Our Lavender Family



Austin, Kate, and Grady. See more photos online at LavenderMagazine.com.



STRUCK

BY OKCUPID'S ARROW

With statistics that say something like a kajillion people are meeting their match via online dating, it's no wonder that Austin Calhoun and Kate Nelson did the same.

Thanks to OkCupid's format, Austin could see that Kate had viewed her profile a couple times. Interestingly enough, Kate didn't act because she thought Austin was too short

(laughable, since Austin is six inches taller).

But some profile viewing obviously worked for Kate, as it lead to a first date. "I almost scared her off by using too

many 'air quotations' and being kind of a nerd," Austin says, while using air quotations. "My enthusiasm for sports won her over in the end, and she says she knew she really liked me

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 →

Our Lavender Family

when I yelled at the TV during a football game."

That was 2009. Cut to a few years later and Austin is preparing to propose. She had been in the process of designing rings with the help of Continental Diamond for nearly three months. In a manner that is worthy of a viral proposal video online, Austin made a video for Kate, listing all of the ways Kate made her life better and why she loved her.

"Austin surprised me after work with champagne and a very personal video montage of our life together; at the end of the video she proposed to me," Kate says. "Our wedding was everything we could have asked for. It was in the country, in a barn, near a lake with a hobby farm on site. We had an outdoor ceremony filled with all of the people we love in the whole world. There was a bonfire, that we never made it to, lots of dancing, and a beautiful starry night. Our vision was captured perfectly on our wedding day."

Those rings that Austin designed? Each ring has a stone from Austin's grandmother's own ring, but in a modern setting. "I think our wedding also following that theme — there were elements of the traditional wedding, but there were also some fun twists," Austin says.

Their big day was August 25, 2012 and is described as "a great party" by Austin, complete with donuts and lots of craft beer. Those with a memory for dates will recognize that the ceremony was held nearly a year before same-sex marriage was legally recognized in Minnesota.

To address the topic that was on so many minds and hearts, the couple's wedding website featured an FAQ that gave friends and family an overview about why marriage was important to them and to other Minnesotans. "We used our wedding as a platform to talk to our friends and family about the amendment," Kate says, referencing the amendment that would have banned same-

sex marriage in the state. The couple even worked some "Vote No" signage into their wedding photos. "Our officiant made a statement at the start of our ceremony. We are both very open about our life together and our family and have been for most of our adult lives. Being so open has made it easier for us to talk to people about our family."

So, now that marriage equality has passed, what are two girls to do? Have a legal ceremony too, of course! Almost a year later, on August 1, 2013, Austin and Kate once again said their "I Dos", this time under legal recognition.

Austin laughs, "Kate was overdue with Grady, so our friends joked that it was our shotgun wedding."

Grady Nelson Calhoun, their son, was, believe it or not, a surprise (albeit, a welcomed one).

"After we went on our honeymoon in August 2012, we knew we wanted to start our family and we didn't know how long it would take for Kate to get pregnant," Austin says. "That was our first surprise, because Kate got pregnant [via artificial insemination] immediately and Grady was born August 5, 2013 after over 50 hours of labor to two exhausted but legally married moms. It was pretty amazing that he waited until after we were married to be born and incredibly special to see my name on the birth certificate from the start."

Nearing a year-and-a-half, Grady has developed a unique personality and sense of humor. He likes to give "Cheers" with his sippy cup or bottle and he likes to give the dog (named Pig) hugs. He loves sports already, particularly soccer and football. Austin says, affectionately, that he is equal parts crazy toddler and cute cuddler.

"He is by far the funniest person in our household," Kate shares. "He is a super helper; he always wants to help clean up. He is full of stories and babbles nonstop. We can't wait until we can understand what he is say-

ing. He is also very kind hearted. He likes to spend time with other kids and animals and is always looking to give hugs."

Leaving such a lovable child at home is certainly heart-wrenching, but the realities of today are that people have to work to support themselves. "We both have busy work lives but also some flexibility to prioritize family," Kate says. "We try to have dinner around the table as often as possible and plan lots of together time on the weekends."

Austin, who works at the University of Minnesota, echoed that statement. "It is demanding but I have also found the U to be an incredibly supportive and balanced place to work. I was in the situation where I was working full-time and finishing my Ph.D., and while that was by no means easy, I had the support of my workplace and my family to make it happen," she says, before jokingly adding "And now you can call me Dr. Calhoun (although no one does)."

Many would call them a "power couple," with successful careers (Kate has worked in the nonprofit sector for over a decade) while building a family, but that's a title that Austin and Kate eschew.

"I think it's ridiculous," Kate says. "We are like a lot of families, doing our best to be good parents, partners, and colleagues. The trick for us is having fun while we do it. If we can succeed at all of those things and have fun while we do it then we have hit the jackpot!"

Austin, on the other hand, finds it flattering, and kind of funny. "I can think of 100 other couples more 'powerful' than us," she says. "However, I think we are just really good at being Austin and Kate and Grady, and that it depends on what you think is 'powerful.'"

Of course, behind every great couple (whether powerful or not), is a great support system, something that Austin and Kate have in spades. Kate's family has been supportive

throughout her life, from coming out to getting married to having a baby, something she deems "priceless."

According to Austin, they have amazing family, both by blood and choice. Austin, originally from outside Washington, D.C., is a transplant to Minnesota. "I am often overwhelmed by how welcoming my Minnesota family has been to me," she says. "Kate's family and friends welcomed me into their circle easily and I know we can count on them to bring over a hotdish or babysit Grady if the need arises. I also am lucky to have the support of my parents and siblings on the East Coast. They all made the trek from the warmer mid-Atlantic region to Minnesota for Christmas, which was awesome."

As for the future, the couple hopes it holds more of the same, both the mundane and the adventures. They're also hoping to add another baby within the next couple of years. But for now, they're basking in the rewards and challenges of raising Grady.

"Grady is a mirror and a sponge," Austin says. "Kate told the dog to 'pipe down.' And Grady has been a mimicking that all around the house (it sounds more like 'PA DA'). It's a good reminder that he absorbs so much and it makes you want to be the best version of your self."

Kate adds to that thought: "Grady has added so much to our lives, he has brought us closer together in many ways," she says. "Every day with him is new and exciting and we feel grateful to be going through this adventure together. We try to make space for each of us to take time for ourselves by going to yoga, the gym, or out with a friend. We also have prioritized date nights at least twice a month. We know that we are better parents and partners when we address our whole self." ■

Photography by Brett Dorrian at www.brettdorrianartistrystudios.com.

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A stylized logo for 'Lavender's First Thursdays' featuring a pink martini glass with a green olive and a black straw, surrounded by small circles.

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The itching. The combing. The sterilizing.

Getting rid of lice is never fun, and getting them to abandon ship is a daunting task. Lice are the stuff of teachers' nightmares. So imagine the horror Jennifer Herbert experienced when she received a call from the school nurse saying her daughter had head lice. On picture day, no less.

Immediately Herbert's mind started racing. Her other daughter probably has lice, too! Which would mean she had them as well. Of course, her fears were correct: every member of her family had lice, marking "Picture Day 2013" as a memorable day for the family.

"Looking at their school pictures could bring back memories such as horror, shame,

fear, panic, or doom," Herbert says. "Instead, looking at their pictures makes me giggle. Yes; we all had lice. Yes; I am a 41-year-old dentist, mother, and wife, and I got head lice. And I'm OK! I survived!"

Sure, looking back is a chuckle waiting to happen. But, in the moment, everything was certainly not cotton candy and Ferris wheels. "When I first

heard the news I absolutely flipped out," Herbert says. "And that's putting it mildly. I tried tackling this project myself using toxic over-the-counter shampoos and failed miserably. They simply didn't work. I then sought out the help of a certified lice professional, and my life changed. No more lice! No more shame! No more panic!"

And that's how it all started.



Opposite: Jennifer Herbert and Jennifer DeChant take care of an ugly reality with a beautiful solution. Above: Cheerful stations for the patrons and products for the home.

Now, a little more than a year later, Herbert and her dental partner, Dr. Jennifer DeChant, deal with lice on a daily basis. The two have owned and operated J&D Dental in Minneapolis for more than 15 years, and they opened a second venture, Sugar & Spice & No More Lice, a certified lice removal business, in Blaine in 2014.

"This was a completely unnatural step," DeChant says. "Never in a million years did I think I would open a head lice removal clinic. However, once I was informed and educated, I became passionate about lice and the growing need for this business. People are busy and stressed, and an outbreak of lice can throw families into a tailspin!"

DeChant, who says she had never combed another person's hair before this new venture, travelled with her business partner to Florida to train at the Shepherd Institute, becoming certified in lice removal.

"We didn't have to become certified," Herbert says, "but felt strongly that the only way to be successful and excel at our new venture was to educate, educate, educate. We come from a medical background, so education is key. Knowledge is power. And we chose Katie Shepherd, a world-renowned lice expert. Her technique is proven to be 100 percent successful and she has the research to back it up."

Getting into lice removal is sure to raise eyebrows, but DeChant's partner Regina was supportive and excited about the new endeavor. Her parents and friends? A little less enthusiastic. "[They] paused when I told them. They were most likely

waiting to hear 'just kidding!' Nope! Not kidding!"

Herbert got a similar reaction. She says, "My family had the same reaction they had when they found out I was becoming a dentist: 'Why on Earth would you want to do that?'"

Despite the question marks looming over friends and family members' heads, the business partners have gone on to create a welcoming environment, creating a space that resembles a candy store so that children feel more at ease.

"This is so much like dentistry," Herbert says. "Nobody wants to be here. People are scared."

Unlike a visit to the dentist, however, people leave Sugar & Spice & No More Lice relieved and thankful. The environment is very bright, clean, friendly, and laid back. People enter the clinic visibly stressed, but leave much more relaxed. Not only does the staff eradicate head lice, but also educates clients on the proper way to efficiently combat lice, including how to treat their homes. According to DeChant, most websites are completely outdated and instruct people to do things that are absolutely unnecessary. The process is not as cumbersome as people are lead to believe. During treatment, clients are also provided movies, (disposable) headphones, and DVD players, if interested, to calm nerves and focus attention away from the treatment.

"Speaking from experience, lice is an overwhelming situation to any parent—especially those who are dealing with it for the first time," Herbert says. "To

be able to educate parents and simplify what they need to be doing at home definitely calms nerves. Parents are the ones bringing the children into our clinic, so we do market to them. We also market our services to daycares and schools so they can provide their students and families with updated, accurate facts about lice and treatment."

If someone believes they have lice, the educated staff at Sugar & Spice & No More Lice will see them and conduct a head check to verify that they do, in fact, have lice. If it is a confirmed case, then staff eradicate the lice by going through the hair strand-by-strand to remove nits (eggs) and any live bugs. This safe, non-toxic method is very detail-oriented, so severe cases could take up to several hours. If a person is treated, Herbert and DeChant request that they return to the clinic in 5-7 days for a re-check. In addition, the location features products available for purchase to aid in lice prevention.

With such a thorough process, it's no wonder treatment comes with a guarantee that upon leaving the clinic, you will be lice-free!

"Our staff is intensely trained, first on mannequins, then on each other, and finally on live patients," Herbert says. "To ensure proper training, we usually ask the education community for nominations for families in need who have been struggling with lice, but have no means to get rid of it once and for all. These families are treated for free in our clinic as a way to expose our staff to all degrees of lice infestations. Our staff gets

great experience and we get to give back to the community. It's a win-win situation."

In educating clients, the staff addresses myths surrounding head lice. To begin with, head lice cannot jump or fly. They are contracted generally by head-to-head contact. They also prefer *clean* hair—the cleaner the better!

An estimated 6 million to 12 million people in the United States contract head lice annually, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Only about half of those develop the telltale itch, so many cases go undiagnosed and head lice spreads.

But the reality remains: children are more likely to contract head lice than adults. "Children have fewer boundaries than adults and are more likely to sit closely together, hug, etc.," DeChant says. "This gives lice a chance to run from one source to the next. But with the invention of 'selfies,' lice are spreading like wildflowers even through older children and adults."

Thankfully, these women and their staff have gotten over the "heebie-jeebies" of the issue. "Most people itch at the mere mention of the word, 'lice,'" Herbert says. "As time goes on, it is happening less and less. You become desensitized to the bug issue and focus more on helping the families through what can be a very stressful ordeal. Like our slogan states, 'Relax, we've got this!'" ■

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OUR LIVES | CHILDREN & FAMILY | BY SHANE LUECK

RAINBOW RESOURCES: RECLAIM'S SECOND ANNUAL BRUNCH



With a mission to increase access to mental and integrative health support for GLBTQ youth, Reclaim is working toward the youths' freedom from oppression in all its forms. Reclaim partners with all youth ages 13 – 25 who are marginalized because of their gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation. Through this partnership, Reclaim strives to create a safe physical, emotional, and relational space so that youth may “reclaim” their lives and identities from oppression.

The recession-induced defunding of care for the most marginalized people in the Twin Cities had a devastating impact on GLBTQ youth in particular. In 2009, District 202, a community center for GLBTQ youth lost its physical space and other GLBTQ youth programs across the metro were also cut in the budget process. In response, GLBTQ youth and their allies acted quickly to raise \$35,000 in pledges in just three weeks and Reclaim was born.

In the years since, Reclaim has offered therapy for youth and families, training for practitioners, and community partnerships for social change at the intersection of gender and racial justice. Reclaim is working toward its mission of holistic healing. This commitment to the development of the whole person is exemplified in their According to Reclaim, “We believe that the holistic healing work requires all of us to be engaged. We believe in building the leadership capacity of those most impacted and having them lead our efforts in community and healing.”

Since its founding, Reclaim has directly served over 150 youth, the majority of whom are uninsured. However, each week the organization is forced to turn away almost as many youth as are served, due to lack of resources. Reclaim remains one of the only (if not *the* only) barrier-free queer and trans youth-specific therapy resources in the region.

Take the time to show support for Reclaim's work at the second annual Celebrate the Love Brunch held Saturday, February 7. The event will feature music by One Voice Mixed Chorus and catering by Cowgirls Killer Catering. The Celebrate the Love Brunch is a great time to introduce family, friends, and colleagues to Reclaim's work; either sponsor the table and treat your table to brunch, or sponsor the table and collect ticket payments from those who join you. Either way, a portion of your table hosting will be tax deductible.

For more information on the organization or to register for the brunch, head to www.reclaim-lgbtyouth.org. ■



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BY MIKE CASSIDY

KIDS AND TAXES

Tax professionals often joke that when folks have a child, they are bringing a new tax deduction into the world. Just today, my husband told me a friend at work just had their third child, and I worried that it may have been born after the first of the year and therefore, couldn't be claimed as a 2014 deduction. Yes, we do think that way.

The exemption you can claim for a child is, of course, only a small part of the financial impact children add to a parent's life. For instance, the impact of children on your taxes are many, and almost all of them helpful. Here are some examples as children age.

First, a note about the difference between deductions and credits. Deductions are a subtraction from your taxable income, which help to lower the amount of income your taxes are calculated from. Tax credits, on the other hand, are a reduction of your tax liability directly and, in some cases, can actually be paid out to you over and above your tax liability. If you had a choice, you'd want to pick tax credits but both are helpful!

BABY OF MINE

GLBT folks become parents in many ways and the tax code can actually help. When we adopt we are able to claim a tax credit to cover all of the cost of adoption up to \$13,190, including adop-

tion and attorney fees, court costs, and even adoption-related travel. This credit is a reimbursement of the costs of a successful adoption. Though if your adoption isn't successful, you are still able to claim adoption costs in the next year. And if you adopt a special needs child, you may be able to claim the full credit even if you didn't have any adoption expenses. This credit has an income ceiling that begins to phaseout at \$197,880 in income.

Out-of-pocket medical expenses associated with having a child are also deductible. Fertility treatments and artificial insemination procedures which are often not covered by insurance may be claimed as a medical expense deduction.

BRINGING UP BABY

There are several ways taxes can help with the costs of raising a child. First is claiming them as a dependent. For 2014, the personal exemption is \$3,950 per person/child. Even if the child was born or adopted on 12/31/2014 you are able to claim them for the whole year!

If you are a single parent, you may also be able to claim 'Head of Household.' This filing status increases your standard deduction for folks that don't itemize their deductions.

You may also qualify to claim the Child Tax Credit. This credit

CHILDCARE CAN BE SURPRISINGLY EXPENSIVE! THERE ARE A FEW WAYS YOU CAN GET SOME HELP THROUGH TAX CREDITS OR TAX DEDUCTIONS TO PAY FOR CHILDCARE.

is \$1,000 and can be used to pay down your tax liability or be refunded to you if you don't have a tax liability. There is an income phaseout to this credit of \$75k if you're single, and \$110k if you're married (I just love that I need to add the 'M' word to this article!).

The Earned Income Credit may also be of help to some folks. As an example, this credit is for those with incomes as high as \$49,186 if you have two children and are married. Credit amounts and income ranges depend on the number of children you have and if you are married or single.

WHO'S WATCHING BABY

Childcare can be surprisingly expensive! There are a few ways you can get some help through tax credits or tax deductions to pay for childcare. One option is the Childcare Tax Credit. The credit is based on your income, but for most folks it is a 20% credit of your childcare costs. You can consider up to \$3,000 of childcare costs per child.

You may also consider doing a dependent care account through your employer. In this account you're able to deduct dollars from your paycheck to save for childcare expenses. The amount you save, up to \$5,000 a year, will lower your taxable income. This is ideal for higher income families who experience higher tax rates.

HEALTHY BABY

Folks have been talking about health insurance a lot lately due to the Affordable Care Act. And, just like everyone else, children need to be health insured as well. For 2014 there is a tax penalty for not insuring a child's health, however if the cost is prohibitive, there are several ways to get help through subsidies, Medical Assistance, tax credits, and exclusions to the penalty.

In Minnesota you can get help by working with a 'navigator,' an insurance agent or with MNSure directly, our state insurance exchange. In the GLBT community, several organizations have pulled together to provide help in getting health insurance. For more information about these programs, you can reach them at benefits@mnaidproject.org or 612-373-2433.

EDUCATING BABY

Both the State of Minnesota as well as the federal government have incentives for education spending. For Minnesota, there is a tax credit for lower income families and a tax deduction for everyone that allows you to claim the costs associated with Kindergarten through twelfth grade. Items such as required supplies, tuition for private school, lessons for music, art, language or others, and tutoring can be claimed as a deduction on your

Minnesota income tax return.

After high school the federal government can help with school costs. First is the American Opportunity Credit, which can be used to help with the first 4 years of college. This partially refundable credit is up to \$2,500. It is a credit of 100% of the first \$2,000 of tuition paid, then 25% of the next \$2,000 paid.

The other tuition credit program is the Lifetime Learning Credit. This non-refundable tax credit is up to \$2,000 and is a credit of 20% of the tuition paid up to \$10,000.

The last federal program is a tuition deduction of up to \$4,000. All three of these federal programs have income limits.

PLANNING TO EDUCATE BABY

The federal government, in partnership with states, has also created Qualified Tuition Programs with tax advantages for education, and it comes in two versions. The largest program is the 529 Savings Plan, which allows you to save money in an investment account, deferring all taxes on income earned in the account. As long as the funds are used for qualifying education expenses, earnings and gains come out tax-free. Contribution limits are very high for this program, which is what has made the 529 so popular.

The other program, the 529 Tuition Plan, allows you to pay for tuition at a school at today's prices for your little student's future college. A few states have set up these programs so the tuition can be moved between state schools, but for the most part it is only good for the specific school you've paid.

The last education savings tool is the Coverdell Education Savings account. This account, like the 529 Savings Plan, allows you to save into an account for education. Like the 529, if the funds are used for qualified education expenses, the earnings and gains come out tax-free. This plan has lower contribution limits, however there is more flexibility in where it is invested and what types of education expenses can be paid from it. Where the 529 is only for higher education, a Coverdell can be used for K-12 education expenses.

One of our tax professionals was listening to his granddaughter talk to her parents. She was telling them that grandpa said she's going to college whether she likes it or not. Get them started early, right?! This is less scary than the friend's four-year-old daughter that was telling a stranger at the airport that she is a 'Harvard girl'! ■

Mike Cassidy is a partner and income tax specialist at ROR Tax Professionals LLC. He's been preparing taxes for 22 years. Mike is also a Certified Financial Planner™ practitioner and has been helping folks with their financial planning for 17 years. He is also currently serving as the board president for the Minnesota AIDS Project which was mentioned in the article.

BY FRANCIS EHRSAM

A TOUGH PILL TO SWALLOW

Pat* has been getting looks on the bus lately. The layers of laticed white gauze circling his head from forehead to crest resemble a rounded prayer cap. A rainbow collection of braided wires, the thickness of his thumb, begins behind his right ear and follows the placket of his plaid shirt to his belly button. There, it feeds into a cigar-sized black box which hangs from his neck by a thin strap. The black box has a blue LCD screen displaying a series of numbers. I notice that each wire corresponds to an electrode glued to his head. Four are visible under the gauze on his forehead, near the hairline. Two are above his temples. There are twenty-six of them in all; twenty-four on his head and two on his chest.

"I thought you might be hooked up to a bomb," says a friend. "Please! Before the board meeting!" shouts another. His grayish

beard rises in a grin, and his eyes soften.

We're at The Aliveness Project in Minneapolis, where he's agreed to speak with me over coffee. It's lunchtime in a room occupied by rows of tables. About 40 members, mostly men, are quietly eating lunch. At first, Pat sits quietly, measuring me with his eyes. The sounds are of a normal cafeteria at lunch; silverware striking plates, the shuffling of chairs.

"I've got a tumor, and I've got something else up there causing the seizures," he says. "It's not related to being HIV positive." His seizures happen mostly at night, baffling his doctors. "On the 27th of July I was on my bike on France Avenue. And the next thing I know I'm lying on France Avenue looking up and people are looking at me. It's been tough."

Pat is 62, self-employed, and running a business full-time. Delivering product to clients while unable to drive is tough. Having to take the bus for groceries is also tough. It's tough to rely on friends for rides to doctor's offices. Pat's father taught him self-reliance; he's not in the habit of backing down from tough.

Pat is also HIV positive. In 1984, as a young man in California, he recalls his early symptoms; the vomiting, exhaustion, an occurrence of shingles. Like most gay men in the 1980s, he used an assumed name to get tested. When he went back for the results, he recalled seeing rows of white cards on a table. Some of them had small red flags attached to them. The card presented to Pat had a red flag attached to it. Tough break.

He came back to the Twin Cities to die, he tells me. His Catholic family was understanding. His father asked him if he wanted his inheritance early.

In 2013, according to the Minnesota Department of Health, there were 301 reported new cases of HIV infection in Minnesota. 133 of those cases were in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. White males accounted for 48 percent of all new cases. African Americans, though only 4 percent of the population, accounted for 24 percent. Almost a quarter of new cases are women. HIV targets the young, with a majority of cases occurring between the ages of 20-34 in men and 25-34 in women.

The people I interviewed for this article all told me the same thing. The spotlight has moved away from HIV and toward more front-page, media-friendly diseases like Ebola. Young people today even think that AIDS has been cured, as easy as taking a pill. And prevention is not being taken seriously, especially by the young. The next encounter, next roll of the dice, is just a social media application away. All four of the HIV positive people I interviewed, including a married, heterosexual woman, contracted the disease from a trusted sexual partner that was aware they were sick at the time of infection.

Now, life's routine is wrestling day after day with the pills. And the bills. The disease is damaging physically, psychologically, emotionally, and financially.

Financially speaking, some are better prepared than others. Charles* was diagnosed in 1983 after contracting the disease in Key West the year before. He was educated, out of college, and having a great time on the party scene. Condoms were for heterosexual couples avoiding pregnancy.

By the time he got back to the Twin Cities and started working, it was the early nineties, and HIV had changed from whispered rumor to the mainstream. Seeing the spread of the disease, Charles applied, and was approved for, private disability insurance. Charles was one step ahead of the insurance companies, who weren't yet testing for the disease.

Private, permanent insurance is a good idea for most people, and an absolute must for any person living a high-risk lifestyle. The two most common are life and disability insurance. Disabil-

ity policies can cover both short-term and long-term disabilities. Talk to a knowledgeable financial advisor or insurance agent about what's right for you. If you're young and in shape, they can be extremely affordable. Permanent, private insurance can address issues not covered by employer-sponsored plans. Best of all, if you change or lose your job, your life and disability policies remain in force, which is exactly what happened in Charles's case. He suffered an extreme bout of vertigo at work, the first of his symptoms, and was hospitalized for a significant period of time with an AIDS-related illness. His T-cell count was at zero.

His employer assured him his job would be waiting for him. It wasn't. His scheduled first day back to work was a Monday in



Photo of one resident's medications, Clare Housing.

1996, and on the Friday before a letter arrived by registered mail. Charles had been terminated.

To Charles, that disability policy was a literal lifesaver. His medications, like most suffering from HIV-related illnesses, cost between \$2,500 and \$3,000 per month. He went on Social Security disability in 1996. Since he's on full-time disability, he can't work, so he spends most of his time doing volunteer work. He told his story across a desk at The Aliveness Project in Minneapolis, an amazing, member-driven facility providing food, healing therapies, counseling, and other supporting services to the HIV community.

Pat also had insurance. As a business owner with respectable income, he took it upon himself to seek private health insurance. The premiums were expensive; he recalls paying between \$8,000 and \$10,000 per year to keep the policy in force. Pricey, but worth it, as his HIV medication would be covered, saving him almost thirty thousand dollars annually. When his insurance company dropped him, and his income didn't qualify him for assistance, he went to the insurance exchange and was able to buy coverage without having to take a physical. Today, with the help of the people at The Aliveness Project, he's found a way to use coupons from the drug companies to pay for his out-of-pocket expenses.

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TODAY, MOST PEOPLE HAVE EMPLOYER-SPONSORED HEALTH INSURANCE THROUGH WORK. IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS THOROUGHLY; DON'T RELY ON THE ADVICE OF YOUR CUBICLE-NEIGHBOR.



Photo of one resident's medications, Clare Housing.

That's another \$3,000 in savings.

Today, most people have employer-sponsored health insurance through work. It's a good idea to research your options thoroughly; don't rely on the advice of your cubicle-neighbor. Talk to your human resources department, test their knowledge about the differences in coverage between the plans offered. Educate yourself about COBRA, a government sponsored program which may allow for temporary continuation of employer health coverage after losing a job. Ask for financial help. Find someone you trust and don't hesitate – this may well be the most important decision you ever make.

Xander knows this all too well. He was diagnosed in 1999 with the disease while living in Key West as young man in his early 20s. After his diagnosis, he didn't think he was going to live, so he partied hard. By 2004 he was bankrupt, and still alive. When he realized he was going to live, perhaps a long time, he knew he needed serious financial help.

He found it through the Minnesota AIDS Project, a statewide nonprofit agency providing benefits assistance, case management, and financial assistance to those in need with HIV. They also provide assistance with Social Security Disability, finding housing, and coordinating insurance. Xander took a crash course in personal finance; his own. Today, he is Operations Coordinator at Clare Housing, another nonprofit organization providing housing support and counseling to Minnesota HIV patients. I asked him to describe the impact of helping people like himself.

"It has allowed me to forgive myself in ways that I didn't think were possible. You don't, like, expect when you're a young gay male teenager that you're going to get HIV. That's not on the list of things to do. You're invincible. And that was very much what I told myself, that I was invincible and that this would never happen to me. And then it did. And so there was a lot of shame and guilt around the diagnosis, period."

"You have to think about your future. You are going to have a future. I made a lot of poor financial decisions. Some of that had to do with being a 20-year-old. You have to think about the 'what ifs' and think about your safety net. Do I have life insurance? Can I get life insurance?"

Today, Xander is acutely aware that he cannot go without health insurance. He has coverage through work; his out-of-pocket costs are very manageable. Medications are covered. He receives assistance from the state, and counsels others on how to do so. He qualifies for ADAP, a state and federally-

funded drug assistance program which helps him cover his costs. Having the safety net of ADAP is vital for me," he says. His pills cost about \$2800 per month. "For most people, \$2000 in out-of-pocket expense is a lot of money." Especially when you're planning a wedding, which he and his partner will be celebrating in the spring.

Also critically important is having one's legal affairs in order, well in advance. Every person should have a will, durable power-of-attorney, and healthcare directive in place and updated periodically. These documents are considered the primary building blocks of any good estate plan, but also carry important benefits; they allow someone else the authority to make important decisions regarding a person's finances and medical care if that person is unable to do so themselves. Seek out a qualified attorney or legal professional and have these documents created, their importance cannot be overstated.

Three very brave souls. One prepared in advance, one learned on the fly, one bravely picked up the pieces. All three spoke candidly about pill fatigue, the psychological side effects of years of swallowing life-saving medication that ravages their bodies. They are allowed no breaks, and each has his coping mechanisms and routines. A daily reminder of an avoidable mistake.

Mistakes can be costly; preparation costs nothing. Talk to a financial advisor. ■

**Names were changed for confidentiality.*

Everyone has milestones to celebrate in life



Be prepared to make the most of each one.
There are things you plan for throughout your life, and there is no better feeling than knowing you are prepared when that moment arrives.



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HOW TO BE A YOUNG FINANCIAL GURU

IN 10 NOT-SO-EASY STEPS



As a 24-year-old, who will be completing a master's degree in three short months, I know a thing or two about how hard it can be to enter the dreaded "real world." Our parents may think they're able to commiserate; we've all heard the "Honey, we've all been there" speech before, but our generation is in a very unique situation.

Starting a career in what people are calling the worst economy since The Great Depression is no small task. College students are graduating deep in student loan debt — and often credit card debt — and are facing an economic climate that makes it difficult to get a job right out of college. It's even been projected that we're going to be the first generation not to earn more than our parents over our lifetime. Yikes!

But before you go ugly-crying about your unfortunate luck, Suze Orman has some great (albeit stern) tips for twenty- and thirty-somethings. Before becoming a world-renowned financial guru and television personality, Suze Orman was a broke waitress, just like the rest of us. Her story is one of success that seems so distant and unattainable to us, the mere peasants. However, in recent years she has listened to the pleas of twenty- and thirty-somethings who want advice that is specific to them and the current economic climate.

Actually speaking with her might lead to tears (let's face it, she's a terrifying, tough money guru), but in *The Money Book for the Young, Fabulous & Broke*, Suze Orman addresses the unique concerns of this group of individuals, and offers some advice that is contrary to what many of us may have learned.

Right away this book seems to have me pegged: Young? Check. Fabulous? Double Check. Broke? Absolutely. The best part is, the language in this book is in "plain English," meaning that she doesn't bog you down in financial mumbo-jumbo and actually defines words that the average young person probably doesn't know.

If you're like me, you are immediately heading to Amazon and spending your last dime on this book. If you're not like me, you won't impulse-buy a book by a woman that you're scared of. Luckily for you, I'm going to share the wealth (so to speak, please don't contact me asking for money).

The book is organized by chapters that correlate to important money issues:

1. KNOW THE SCORE

Knowing your credit score is as daunting as waiting for those STD results, but it's something that you have to do. Orman says that the most important thing twenty- and thirty-something-year-olds can do for their financial future is to know and improve their credit score.

The thing is, credit card debt isn't inherently bad, but if your interest rate is at 30 percent, that's bad — actually, horrific! It might be common sense, but the lower the interest rate, the better. If the debt is because you're trying to make your mark and make your way in the world, then Suze doesn't have a problem with that. If you have debt because of clubbing, excessive shopping and weekend trips to the border, then you're an idiot and the debt

will do you in. The amount of money spent on clubbing is absolutely amazing! Go to a friend's house for a drink and turn on the stereo. You can buy a bottle of vodka for what it costs for one drink at a club. \$90 in one night, just for drinks? That's the amount of money needed to fund your Roth IRA every month. But I digress.

In the book, she thoroughly explains what the FICO score is comprised of, how to improve it, how to run a credit score report, how to fix errors, and how your credit score can affect your financial future. Ultimately, if you have a good FICO score, that's the most important thing. Most creditors determine whether they are going to lend to you based on your FICO score, not your credit score. You won't be able to rent, buy, or do anything in life without a good FICO score.

2. CAREER MOVES

Orman's advice in this chapter is sometimes surprising. She advocates that you find a job you love, and not just work for the money — which goes against advice we frequently hear about putting in our licks at a job that we don't like just to make money. She even advocates using credit cards for a few years to supplement your income if you have a job you love but that does not pay much in the beginning.

Whoa, now. I see you fantasizing an extravagant life in the city. Reel it in. Orman doesn't advise that you finance an expensive lifestyle, but rather that you use credit to help survive by meeting basic needs until your career pays enough to support you completely.

The best way to go about this is making sure that those you are dependent on for a paycheck, are dependent on you. The first thing you have to realize is that even though it's a horrific time for people our age, this is a time that many of us can use to our advantage. You come in before the boss, stay after she is gone, work on Saturdays. Make them dependent on you and you will grow! You have to get people's attention and establish yourself.

3. GIVE YOURSELF CREDIT

Because Orman advocates that young people use their credit cards for basic living expenses if their jobs do not pay them enough, she uses this chapter to give advice on how to limit your expenses with credit cards, such as by finding low interest cards with no annual fees. She also explains how to avoid getting behind on credit card payments.

This also brings us back to a point made earlier: don't go hog-wild with your spending. Honest to God, the amount of money we waste on designer clothes is atrocious! "Having to have" the Jimmy Choos or \$700 purse is ridiculous. Do you think anyone even cares? Besides, they can't even see the label. Unless they can, in which case...yeah, I might not be the best person for this chapter. I'm guilty as charged. Note to self: work on this.

4. MAKING THE GRADE ON STUDENT DEBT

Student loan debt plagues millions of college graduates, and Suze Orman offers encouragement that the student loans are likely to be worthwhile as

the incomes of those who carry them climb over the years thanks to their higher education degrees. She also offers specific ways to both cope with student loan payments and lower the interest rate.

Under no circumstances should you fall behind on student loan payments. Even if you were to declare bankruptcy, your debt would likely not be forgiven. If you're having trouble paying your bills, go to studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans to learn about deferment and forbearance options.

Her best advice? It's not about being so specific with how you divide up your salary. It's hard to divide your salary into set percentages. If all you're making is \$1000 per month, it's almost impossible to divide up (trust me), but all of you know when you're spending too much! It's not about being so specific. The first thing you should do with your money is spend every extra dollar you have to pay down loans and credit card debt.

5. SAVE UP

In this chapter, Orman offers specific techniques to find more money in your budget and begin to save. It seems impossible, but she promises it's doable. For instance, she doesn't say to stop going to the bar altogether, but instead suggests that you make better decisions, such as buying a beer or a glass of wine instead of a \$10 martini, or even going to a cheaper bar. Other techniques include checking your credit card statement monthly for errors.

The important thing to remember is that it's not about cutting everything out; it's about cutting a little bit off of everything. Don't try to give up all your favorite things at once. If you go cold turkey, you will explode. Just cut down! You can indulge, but indulging doesn't mean every day. I mean, come on! Do you really have to have Starbucks every day? Can you go clubbing twice a month instead of every weekend? Pick the things you really love to do and just do them twice a month.

The biggest culprit for me is eating out. It seems like there is an opportunity to buy a meal around every corner. The thing I have learned is that working hard is not an excuse to skip preparing food and opting for the restaurant around the corner. Make your food and bring it to work with you. Stop. Wasting. Money. Stop giving yourself excuses. You'll never enjoy life if you continue to waste money.

6. RETIREMENT RULES

Trying to tell most young people who may be deep in credit card and student loan debt to save for retirement is a hard sell, I'll give you that. But Orman offers a compelling argument. For example, if someone who is 25 invests \$300 a month for 15 years (a \$54,000 investment) and earns an 8% return in a retirement account – and then doesn't invest any more after that – that person will have \$1.05 million by the age of 70. Orman explains the various retirement vehicles that are available, and which one to invest in first.

Planning your retirement is one of the most important decisions that you will ever make concerning your financial future. That is a statement I firmly believe since literally any financial guru you come across says the same thing. Yes, you're scrambling to pay the rent. But please listen: pushing yourself to save even a small amount now is, hands down, the single smartest investment play you can make. It's all about the time your money will have to marinate — “compounding” is the technical term — before you need it in retirement.

In a perfect world, let's say you invest \$5,000 a year starting at age 25. Assuming your money grows at an annual six percent, you'll have approximately \$820,000 by the time you're 65. Now let's suppose you don't start investing until age 35. You'll have to sock away about \$9,800 a year to wind up with the same nest egg. (A \$5,000 annual investment for 30 years will yield just \$419,000.) And don't kid yourself that it's easy to save money as you grow older; just imagine children and a mortgage tugging at your purse strings.

7. INVESTING MADE EASY

Explaining the principles of investing in one chapter is not easy, especially for someone as financially dimwitted as I am, but Orman provides a basic primer of the stock market and mutual funds, explaining specific terms such as load or no load, and small and large cap funds. In addition, she gives a short synopsis of the best choice for allocating funds in your 401k or Roth IRA.

According to Orman, a Roth IRA is one of the best investments you can make. A Roth IRA is an individual retirement account which allows an individual to set aside a specified dollar amount of income after taxes. A Roth IRA provides tax-free growth of your money in lieu of getting a tax deduction. Think of a Roth IRA as an umbrella, and you can put almost anything that you want under it. A Roth IRA may be invested in stocks, bonds, mutual funds, certificates of deposits, and/or money market accounts. Individual retirement accounts can be set up at a bank, brokerage house, or any financial institution.

Again, Orman says the best thing you could do is to have a Roth IRA. You can withdraw any money you put into it at any time, without any taxes or penalties. That's where you should get money from, not your 401K or pension plans. She also says you should be investing in individual stocks that pay a high dividend yield.

8. BIG-TICKET PURCHASE: CAR

Orman immediately argues against leasing a car, providing mathematical data to prove why leasing is not a good investment. (Full disclosure: I had no idea leasing a car was an option. So, thanks Suze, for putting that idea in my head.) She would prefer that people in their twenties buy used cars, which obviously makes the most sense, but she also has strategies for those who want to buy new.

If you're as inept at buying cars as I imagine I would be (fun fact: I've never actually done it), you need not fret! She outlines the best way to deal with car salespeople, and the financial implications your choice of a car has on numerous aspects, such as insurance.

9. BIG-TICKET PURCHASE: HOME

In the last 5 to 10 years, many financially unprepared people have jumped into home ownership, and they have suffered the consequences (see: real estate crash circa 2008). While Orman does not suggest that you have to be completely debt-free before purchasing a home, she does insist that your debts be on the decline, and that you have at least three percent available for the down payment (though she would prefer 20 percent, which, frankly, sounds astronomical).

This is one of the most thorough chapters in the book, which is funny to me since it seems the most far-off. She clearly outlines all the fees and expenses that come with home ownership that many people do not consider, such as closing costs, maintenance, property taxes, and insurance, which can make a home payment that seems within your budget suddenly several hundred dollars out of reach.

10. LOVE & MONEY

Many people get married in their twenties and thirties, so Orman ends the book with this chapter. While the chapter includes practical advice, such as whether to have a prenuptial agreement and what kind of life insurance to purchase, she also stresses that you should carefully pick your partner, because when you marry someone, you are marrying their finances and their financial behavior. This can affect you positively or negatively throughout the duration of your marriage.

As someone who diagnoses himself “terminally single,” I would have much preferred advice like “Who pays on the first date?” or “Are dating website fees worth it?” But I suppose that for those luckier in love (read: most of the population), a chapter on marriage definitely seems more prudent to include in a book of this nature. ■

BY ROYA MOLTAJI

EVERYBODY HAS A FINANCIAL FUTURE.

Who Is In Charge of Yours?

Living in the present and finding your “true north” are common themes today. But what about establishing an authentic self so solidly that it perpetuates into the future? We each have the ability to make a mark during our lifetime and to leave the full wake of our legacy behind. For some, legacy is highlighted by family relationships or friendships. For others, giving back to the community underscores life. We all have the opportunity to consciously shape the future, yet estate planning tends to be a topic that is avoided. If you can give yourself permission to explore what you truly want for the future, you will find you have the power to make it so. Putting your thoughts on paper and creating legal documents is a gift to those you leave behind to handle your affairs and promotes the likelihood that your plans will be honored.

What kind of mark would you like to make? Charitable giving is one popular endeavor for individuals when shaping their legacy plans. It can be done during life or after your time on earth. No matter your inclination, charitable giving combines the compelling element of emotional impact along with important financial benefits. Including philanthropy in your legacy planning may be a priority for many reasons. Perhaps you would like to give back to those communities, organizations, or institutions that have played a role in your personal growth and development. Maybe you believe in the social benefit of serving society in general. Memorials to honor those who have been admired or respected have a special appeal. It could be that philanthropy has been part of your family’s culture and is an important tradition to continue and to instill in younger generations. Or, if annual income and expenses haven’t allowed for the magnitude of giving you had hoped for during your working years, estate planning may offer a way to support others eventually.

The recommended method of charitable giving both during life and at death depends on the size of the gift and the type of property given. Your desire for control and your need for income will also be considered, along with how much tax benefits matter to you. Luckily there are many professionals who can help you decipher the most beneficial charitable giving strategies based on these factors. Depending on the size of the charitable organization in mind, there may be staff members dedicated to legacy planning. Others may choose to partner with a family or community foundation, and still others may seek the advice of their financial planning team that includes a trusted adviser, accountant, and attorney. The GLBTQ community tends to benefit from a highly connected web of support, making it relatively easy to find proper resources.

What if charitable giving is not at the top of the list? Is estate planning still beneficial? Envisioning your hopes for the future and writing down the plan is almost always better than moving through life without articulating your intentions. It may be especially important to include or exclude certain family members, friends, or others in your decisions about who will receive pieces of your belongings — both monetarily and in terms of personal property. Our community sometimes faces the challenge of experiencing disapproval from our families of origin. Ensuring that assets are passed to a significant other may be a contested intention if not properly documented. Second marriages or blended families can complicate matters further. Deciding who should receive various assets or belongings can be stressful, but in the absence of estate planning, the state of residence holds the power to determine where assets will go upon death. For many, the thought of one’s own death is less than appealing, but the thought of allowing the state to make the decisions is worse.

Fortunately, estate planning can be as simple or as complicated as you would like to make it. Retirement accounts require a beneficiary to be listed, as do life insurance policies. At the very least, you have the obligation to choose the heir to these types of accounts. It is worth noting that any asset that has a named beneficiary will bypass the probate process and will not be redirected by state law. The avoidance of state determination can also be achieved by the titling of an asset. For instance, if a married couple owns a bank account jointly with rights of survivorship, the account will certainly pass to the surviving spouse when the first spouse dies. Planning can become more complex when aging parents are involved, when family dynamics are in flux, when multiple properties exist, when a family business has been built or passed through the family, and in many other circumstances.

Establishing a personal financial plan not only provides control and clarity, but also offers significant financial benefit. Tax saving solutions, protection solutions, income solutions and growth-oriented solutions are the primary topics addressed by the financial services industry. Leveraging the knowledge and expertise of financial professionals can help set you up for a financially effective plan. This in turn positions you to live authentically with confidence about the future.

Every one of us has an estate plan written out for us. It’s simply a matter of who the author is of the final draft. ■

Roya Moltaji is a Financial Services Representative with Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. MetLife representatives do not provide tax or legal advice.

I'm With The Band

My mother once told me that in every successful relationship there is a gardener and a flower. The gardener tends to the flower and the flower blossoms as a result of the gardener's loving care.

"Seems like a good deal for the flower," I told my mom, "but what does the gardener get out of it?"

My mother, who was the personification of a flower, responded, "Oh, who cares. The lesson here is to find yourself a gardener, because you're going to need one."

In most of my past relationships, I've been forced into the role of gardener, mainly due to the fact that I'm attracted to flowers because they're pretty! But, as my best friend observed, "You are the most reluctant and resentful gardener in history."

And, it's true. The flowers under my care wilted and cried out for water. Most were ultimately rescued from my weed patch by true gardeners and replanted in a nutrient-rich environment where they were finally allowed to thrive.

Luckily for me, six years ago I stumbled into a relationship with a master gardener. It was a happy mistake. She's as pretty as a flower, which is what drew me to her, but she likes to dig her hands deep into my dirt.

OK, I think I've exhausted this metaphor. In plain speak, she does everything for me. She laughs at all my jokes, puts me to bed when I've had too much to drink, and tidies up the disasters I leave in my wake. Someone once asked her what term we use to describe our relationship—partners, girlfriends, spouses? Without hesitation, she said, "I'm her personal assistant."

This arrangement has really worked out well for me! I'm the messy center of her universe. But my happy orbit was thrown off kilter this week when she announced that she was joining a band.

My girlfriend used to be a professional musician, something she gave up in her late 20s for an MBA and financial stability. Recently, though, she met some middle-aged gals who have never given up on their musical dreams and they invited her to join their all-girl group.

At first I was supportive because as much as I love being waited on hand-and-foot, sometimes the 24-hour scrutiny gets to be a bit too much. Sometimes I like to quietly self-destruct and wallow in my own filth without someone trying to fix me.

But then, as it became clear that band practice would interfere with my daily comforts, I began to bristle. Suddenly, the balance had shifted and I was not only tending to my own daily needs but making sure she was able to balance this new hobby with work and life. What's more, she was going to be on stage, in the spotlight. That's a place where flowers belong, not gardeners.

"Where do I fit into all of this?" I asked nervously after she returned from her first rehearsal, happier than I had ever seen her.

It would have been perfectly reasonable for her to smack me in the head for my selfish reaction to her desire for creative fulfillment. But because she's a master gardener, she instinctively knew how to right the situation.

"I've already told the band that you'll be our Yoko," she said soothingly.

"I get to disrupt practice? Make outrageous demands? Cause friction among bandmates? Insist that the band play one of my original atonal compositions, with me shrieking out the words?" I asked with excitement.

"Yep, you get to steal the spotlight," she said.

I've already bought a severe, all-black outfit in preparation for the band's first gig. I'll sit at the bar, demanding free drinks and abject servitude. And when someone questions my attitude, I'll say, imperiously, "I'm with the band."

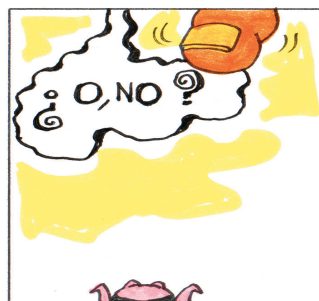
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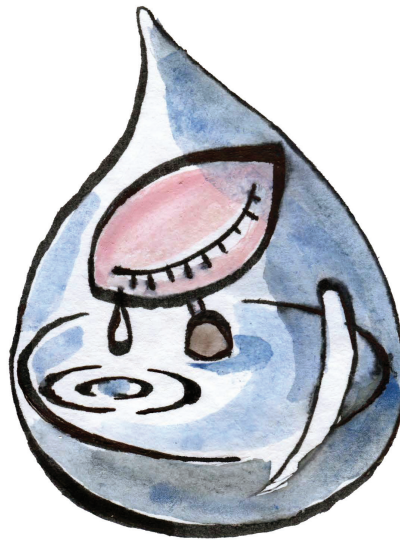
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Your Friend, The Comic Relief

I ran as fast as I could, off the bus, into the streets, into the rain, toward him. I ran through puddles, so many puddles, each deeper than the last. And with the rain came thunder, and with the thunder came wind, and the wind pushed him further and further away. I ran until I swam, until the puddles were ponds, lakes, floods, oceans.

I screamed for him. I screamed for him to Look This Way, to show him that I was swimming to him, to show him I was fighting for him, to tell him: Please Wait. Don't Walk Away. Because I'm Coming. I Promise I'm Coming.

But the thunder drowned out my pleas, the sea filled my lungs, and I sank, still promising, still begging: Please Wait.

And I jerk out of sleep, soaking wet, gasping for air; I see a face, blurry but familiar.

"Justin, Justin, Justin..." The voice is high-pitched. It sounds concerned. Then, quiet. Arms wrap around me.

"It was just a dream," the voice says, holding me, rocking me.

The voice belongs to a friend. My bedroom comes into focus. I'm breathing hard. My heart is racing. I can't stop crying. I feel my friend's neck on top of my head. I feel his jaw move when he whispers, "Shhhhh. It was just a dream, Justin. It was just a dream."

He pulls away and sits in front of me.

"Girl, you are a tragic mess," he says.

I smile when he calls me "girl" or "honey"—these words are his trademarks, what I first found odd but now find endearing. He takes a tissue from my nightstand, wipes my

nose, sits back, and holds my hands.

"You're like my mom," I cry-say and fake-laugh.

"Oh no honey, I ain't your damn mama. They ain't no babies comin' outta this womb, girl." He knows how to make me laugh. He knows how to make everyone laugh.

Now we're lying side-by-side on our backs, facing the ceiling.

"I'm sorry," I say. "I feel bad that you're over here, watching all of this, having to 'help' me get through this."

"Well, I would've been pissed if I came over here to watch after you only to have you ending up being just fine. I mean, I *could* be... Let's see... It's 2:00? Yeah. I *could* be with a man right now."

"Thank you," I say.

"It ain't a thing, honey. Though I *will* say, you *do* look like shit."

More laughing.

Then silence.

Sniffing.

He says, "Do you want to talk about it? You were making an awful lotta noise."

Silence again.

"For me to know exactly what's going on, I'm gonna have to read it in one of your article things, aren't I?"

I smack his arm and sit up. He smiles.

I ask, "Did you go through this when you and Paul broke up?"

He stops smiling.

"Sorry. I didn't mean to—"

"No, no," he says, "I... I did, yeah. I guess. I

just looked a lot better than you do."

Yes, he can make anyone laugh—that's his specialty—and he's the most caring person I know. But he never opens up about *himself*. He's never serious. He's the regular comic relief, a funny keeper of secrets. Friends talk behind his back about it—about how unhealthy it is that he keeps everything "bottled up"—and have long devised sneaky ways to help him.

I say, "Don't you ever want to talk about it? I mean, you know, to get it all out and break down and ugly-cry? You might as well join me."

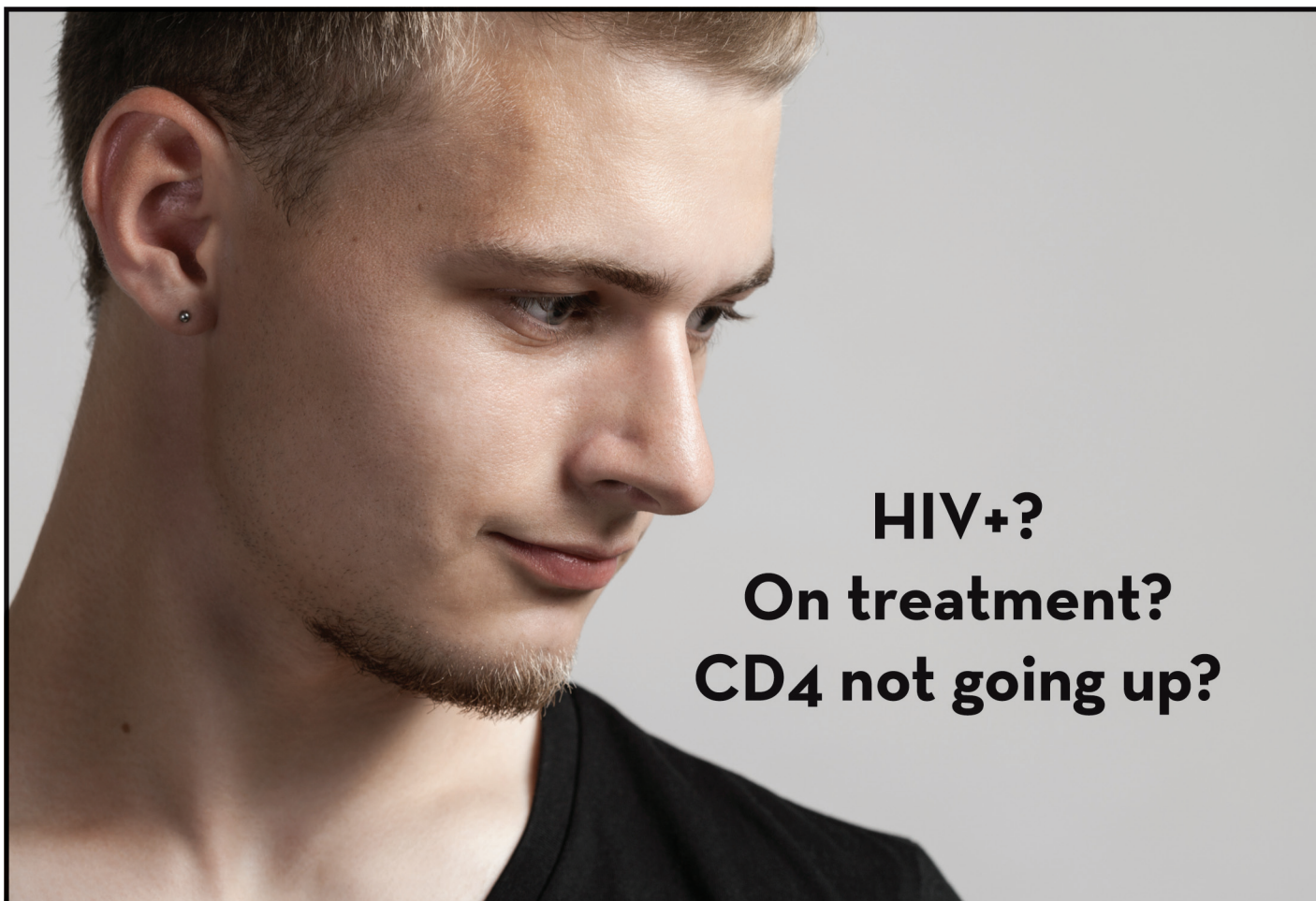
An unknown expression falls over his face. It isn't sad, serious, sardonic, annoyed. It's... absent. For the first time in the years I've known him, he's blank... dark... sure.

Still looking at the ceiling, he responds, unblinking:

"We all have our things... We all have our ways we go about dealing. I open up when no one can see me. Like you. You have your writing—it's so much easier being honest, crying, in front of a computer screen, isn't it?—and me... I have my jokes. It isn't that we're hiding anything. We aren't 'shut off' from the world just because we don't say everything face-to-face—we don't have the walls around our hearts that everyone says I do... We just open up in different ways. I'm happy the way I am. I'm not 'opening up' the way people say I should just because that's the status quo. I do me. I wish people would see that."

Then he looks at me and his glow returns.

"You're going to write about this, aren't you?" ■



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